



News Release

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Contacts: [Tim Church](#), Communications Office
[Donn Moyer](#), Communications Office

360-236-4072

360-236-4076

Medical marijuana authorizations lead to license suspension

Naturopath Carolyn Bearss issued 105 medical marijuana authorizations at Hempfest

OLYMPIA — A Seattle-area naturopath's license has been suspended on charges of providing medical marijuana authorizations after patient exams that fell below patient care standards. The Board of Naturopathy and the Washington State Department of Health suspended naturopathic physician Carolyn Lee Bearss (NT.60134517), who saw 106 patients and gave all but one a medical marijuana authorization at the Seattle Hemp Fest last year.

Charges say the exams averaged less than 15 minutes per patient, that patients weren't required to provide medical records, and that Bearss didn't adequately diagnose the source of patients' pain or discuss treatment options with them. Health officials say this "assembly-line" practice amounts to a medical marijuana authorization mill and doesn't meet patient care standards.

Bearss may not apply to have her license reinstated for at least two years. She must also pay a \$50,000 fine in order to reinstate her license and will be on probation for three years when she returns to practice. The documents can be seen online by clicking "[Look up a health care provider](#)" on the [Department of Health website](#); copies can be requested by calling 360-236-4700. Call that same number to call to file complaints against health care providers in the state.

The Board of Naturopathy regulates naturopathic physicians in Washington. The program establishes, monitors, and enforces qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline. Rules, policies and procedures promote the delivery of quality health care to state residents.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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